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(Original Signature of Member)

117TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

**H. R.** \_\_\_\_\_

To hold accountable senior officials of the Government of the People's Republic of China who are responsible for, complicit in, or have directly persecuted Christians in China, and for other purposes.

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**IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Mrs. HARTZLER introduced the following bill; which was referred to the  
Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**A BILL**

To hold accountable senior officials of the Government of the People's Republic of China who are responsible for, complicit in, or have directly persecuted Christians in China, and for other purposes.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the “Combating the Perse-  
5       cution of Christians in China Act”.

6       **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7       Congress makes the following findings:

1           (1) According to the Department of State's  
2           International Religious Freedom reports, there are  
3           an estimated 12,000,000 Chinese Catholics and  
4           60,000,000 to 80,000,000 Chinese Protestants wor-  
5           shipping in both officially registered and unregistered  
6           churches in China.

7           (2) The practice of Christianity is overseen by  
8           four major entities: Three-Self Patriotic Movement,  
9           the China Christian Council, the Chinese Patriotic  
10          Catholic Association, and the Bishops Conference of  
11          Catholic Church in China.

12          (3) The activities of state-sanctioned religious  
13          organizations are regulated by the Chinese Com-  
14          munist Party, which manages all aspects of religious  
15          life.

16          (4) The Chinese Communist Party is actively  
17          seeking to control, govern, and manipulate all as-  
18          pects of faith through the "Sinicization of Religion",  
19          a process intended to shape religious traditions and  
20          doctrines so they conform with the objectives of the  
21          Chinese Communist Party.

22          (5) On February 1, 2018, the Chinese govern-  
23          ment implemented new religious regulations that im-  
24          posed restrictions on Chinese contacts with overseas  
25          religious organizations, required government ap-

1       proval for religious schools, websites, and any online  
2       religious service, and effectively banned unauthorized  
3       religious gatherings and teachings.

4           (6) Since February 1, 2018, forced closures of  
5       churches, arbitrary detention, and arrest of Chris-  
6       tian clergy and practitioners have steadily increased,  
7       including the arrest and 9-year prison sentence of  
8       Pastor Wang Yi of the Early Rain Covenant  
9       Church.

10          (7) In September 2018, the Holy See an-  
11       nounced that a Provisional Agreement on the ap-  
12       pointment of bishops had been signed with the Chi-  
13       nese government; however, several news sources have  
14       reported that since the agreement was signed Chi-  
15       nese authorities have detained clergy, pressured  
16       them to join an “independent church”, closed unreg-  
17       istered churches, and removed children from church-  
18       es.

19          (8) There are credible reports of Chinese au-  
20       thorities raiding house churches, removing crosses,  
21       confiscating religious paraphernalia, installing sur-  
22       veillance cameras on church property, pressuring  
23       churches to sing songs of the Chinese Communist  
24       Party and display the national flag during commu-  
25       nity worship, forcing churches to replace images of

1 Jesus Christ or the Virgin Mary with pictures of  
2 President Xi Jinping, and banning children and stu-  
3 dents from attending church services.

4 (9) It has been reported that China is rewriting  
5 and will issue a version of the Bible with the “cor-  
6 rect understanding” of the text according to the Chi-  
7 nese Communist Party.

8 (10) According to the Department of State’s  
9 International Religious Freedom reports, the Chi-  
10 nese government has imprisoned thousands of indi-  
11 viduals of all faiths for practicing their religious be-  
12 liefs and often labels them as “cults”.

13 (11) Prisoners include Pastor Zhang Shaojie, a  
14 Three-Self church pastor from Nanle County in Chi-  
15 na’s central Henan was sentenced in July 2014 to  
16 12 years in prison for “gathering a crowd to disrupt  
17 the public order”, and Pastor John Cao, a United  
18 States permanent resident from Greensboro, North  
19 Carolina, who was sentenced for 7 years in prison in  
20 March 2018 under contrived charges of organizing  
21 illegal border crossings.

22 (12) Since 1999, the Department of State has  
23 designated China as a country of particular concern  
24 under the International Religious Freedom Act of  
25 1998.

1           (13) The Bipartisan Congressional Trade Prior-  
2       ities and Accountability Act of 2015 states that the  
3       United States overall trade negotiating objectives  
4       must “take into account conditions relating to reli-  
5       gious freedom of any party to negotiations for a  
6       trade agreement with the United States”.

7           (14) The National Security Strategy of the  
8       United States issued in 2017, 2015, 2006, 2002,  
9       1999, 1998, and 1997, committed the United States  
10      to promoting international religious freedom to ad-  
11      vance the security, economic, and other national in-  
12      terests of the United States.

13 **SEC. 3. STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

14       (a) HOLDING CHINESE OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE  
15      FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ABUSES TARGETING CHINESE  
16      CHRISTIANS.—It is the policy of the United States to con-  
17      sider senior officials of the Government of the People’s  
18      Republic of China who are responsible for, complicit in,  
19      or have directly persecuted Christians in China to have  
20      committed—

21           (1) a gross violation of internationally recog-  
22      nized human rights for purposes of imposing sanc-  
23      tions with respect to such officials under the Global  
24      Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act (22  
25      U.S.C. 2656 note); and

1           (2) a particularly severe violation of religious  
2       freedom for purposes of applying section  
3       212(a)(2)(G) of the Immigration and Nationality  
4       Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(a)(2)(G)) with respect to such  
5       officials.

6       (b) ENSURING TRADE NEGOTIATIONS CONSIDER RE-  
7       LIGIOUS FREEDOM CONDITIONS.—It is the policy of the  
8       United States to ensure that trade negotiations with  
9       China include religious freedom conditions as mandated  
10      by the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Ac-  
11      countability Act of 2015 (19 U.S.C. 4201 et seq.).

12      (c) DEPARTMENT OF STATE PROGRAMMING TO PRO-  
13      MOTE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM FOR CHINESE CHRIS-  
14      TIANs.—Consistent with section 401 of the Frank R. Wolf  
15      International Religious Freedom Act (Public Law 114–  
16      281; 130 Stat. 1436), of the funds available to the Depart-  
17      ment of State for international religious freedom pro-  
18      grams, the Ambassador-at-Large for International Reli-  
19      gious Freedom should support efforts to protect and pro-  
20      mote international religious freedom in China and for pro-  
21      grams to protect Christians in China and other religious  
22      groups.

23      (d) REDESIGNATION OF CHINA AS A COUNTRY OF  
24      PARTICULAR CONCERN.—It is the policy of the United  
25      States to continue to redesignate China as a “country of

1 particular concern”, as long as China continues to engage  
2 in systematic and egregious religious freedom violations,  
3 as defined by the International Religious Freedom Act of  
4 1998 (Public Law 105–292).

5 (e) INTERNATIONAL MINISTERIAL TO ADVANCE RE-  
6 LIGIOUS FREEDOM.—It is the policy of the United States  
7 that the Department of State will host once every two  
8 years the Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom in  
9 order to bring together leaders from around the world to  
10 discuss the challenges facing religious freedom, identify  
11 means to address religious persecution and discrimination  
12 worldwide, and promote great respect for and preservation  
13 of religious liberty.

14 **SEC. 4. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

15 It is the sense of Congress that the United States  
16 should promote religious freedom in China by—

17 (1) strengthening religious freedom diplomacy  
18 on behalf of Christians and other religious minorities  
19 facing restrictions in China;

20 (2) raising cases relating to religious or political  
21 prisoners at the highest levels with Chinese officials  
22 because experience demonstrates that consistently  
23 raising prisoner cases can result in improved treat-  
24 ment, reduced sentences, or in some cases, release  
25 from custody, detention, or imprisonment;

1           (3) encouraging Members of Congress to  
2       “adopt” a prisoner of conscience in China through  
3       the Lantos Human Rights Commission’s “Defending  
4       Freedom Project”, raise the case with Chinese offi-  
5       cials, and work publicly for their release;

6           (4) calling on the Chinese Government to un-  
7       conditionally release religious and political prisoners  
8       or, at the very least, ensure that detainees are treat-  
9       ed humanely with access to family, the lawyer of  
10      their choice, independent medical care, and the abil-  
11      ity to practice their faith while in detention; and

12          (5) encouraging the global faith community to  
13      speak in solidarity with the persecuted religious  
14      groups in China, including Christians.